

State of the Meeting  
2017 Report to the Pacific Yearly Meeting  
Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting

Clerk of Meeting: Ralph Murphy.  
Alternate Clerk: Rachel Findley.  
Recording Clerk: Stephen McNeil.

Remembering that the full name of our tradition is The Religious Society of Friends of the Truth, we ask how has Truth fared among us this year? In the midst of the tumult, we reach down toward the Root where we may find calm, and joy, and Life. From this plowing up have come new shoots.

Meeting for Worship

For much of 2016, events in the larger society had a great impact on Meeting for Worship at Strawberry Creek. Overall attendance at meeting has gone up though a few individuals have stopped coming. Facilities Committee has added additional rows of chairs. Sometimes, those new to Strawberry Creek or new to Quakerism have brought with them new and different understandings of the role of Meeting for Worship and of spoken ministry that long-time members of the community have found unsettling. Our Worship and Ministry Committee has responded to the presence of this new energy - actively working with those new to meeting, widely distributing a pamphlet that describes our meeting's understandings, initiating a second mid-week Meeting for Worship, and offering an education series on Meeting for Worship.

Meeting for Worship at Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting remains gathered, centered and settled. Indeed, some Meetings for Worship in the past year have been particularly so. We are grateful for the gift of worship handed down to us by early Quakers in establishing the practices of Quakerism. We come away from Meeting for Worship feeling that Spirit was present and moving in the meeting and that Meeting for Worship had enriched our lives and opened our hearts.

Life of the Meeting

Our Meeting as a whole has been more deeply involved in society over the past year. Now more than ever we are called to undertake much more work, both in support of the Meeting and in the larger society, than we can possibly take on; so we must always seek ways to prune away that which is not essential in accordance with our testimony on simplicity.

The community has had some difficulty involving and retaining new arrivals and young adults. Care of the Meeting Committee is discussing ways to respond to this concern, and to better welcome newcomers and fresh ideas, including the creation of a Welcoming working group.

In a number of contexts, friends have expressed the desire for smaller, more intimate gatherings where we might get to know each other better, such as cluster groups, worship sharing, and small group meals. Individual community members have brought people together in a number of informal gatherings.

Nominating Committee has had continuing difficulty filling all of the positions in Meeting standing committees; this year, Peace, Earthcare and Social Witness was particularly affected. At the same time, working groups and ad hoc committees have formed to address existing and arising needs. These less formal groups make it possible for people to engage without making a year-long commitment, and yet participate more fully in the life of the Meeting, undertake Meeting tasks in new ways, and respond to the leadings of the Spirit in ways that the formal structure may not serve well. In the past year our meeting's two retreats were convened in this manner, as was a regular Saturday play group, a continuing work group on Power, Privilege and Race, and a worship group for activist Quakers. We will continue to work to make our committees functional and inviting.

There has been a significant increase in the number of children attending our First Day Children's Program. The First Day Children's Program has in the not too distant past experienced some challenges. We are encouraged and delighted that attendance has increased significantly in the past year and that the program is robust and engaging. Some parents have expressed a strong interest in developing a curriculum of (absorbing, deep) Quaker religious education that in future may be brought to the children in the Children's Program.

#### Looking for Truth

On January 29, 2017, the Writing Committee convened a listening meeting after Rise of Meeting at the Berkeley Technology Academy. The general sense from that meeting was overwhelmingly positive. Being aware of other concerns, the committee met with a number of other individuals and committees separately to identify additional positives and challenging aspects of our spiritual lives as a Meeting.

#### Final notes

The Worship and Ministry committee oversees anchoring committees to support the work of six Friends who engage in ministry beyond the Meeting, often beyond the Religious Society of Friends.

Strawberry Creek does a good job of caring for the members of the meeting community. Our social hour after Rise of Meeting is always lively and rich. We seek to be faithful to the guidance of the Spirit which we can feel in the deep silence of our worship and in our Meeting for Business.